



The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● NOVEMBER 1994

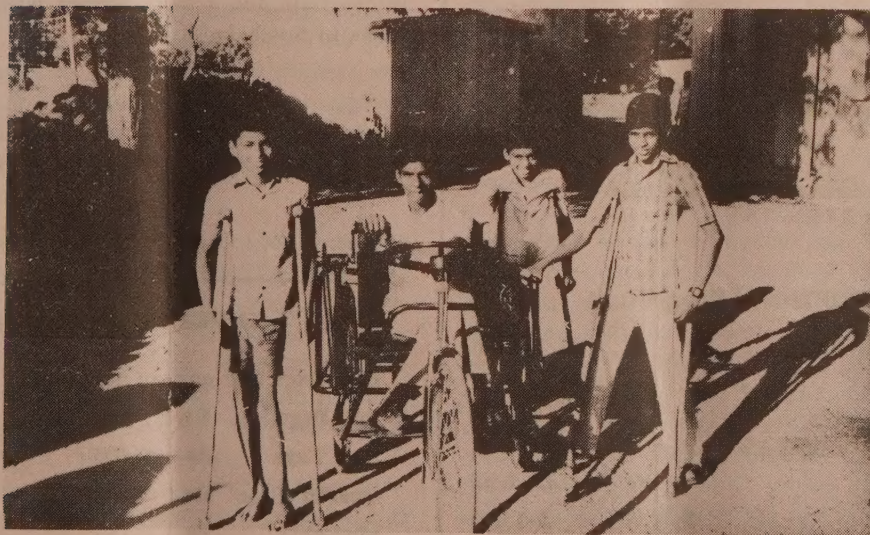
PROCESSED

APR 25 1995

GTU LIBRARY

WE ARE GOD'S CHILDREN.

— I. John : 3, 2



	Page
Services-Sustaining-Strategies-Mission In South Asia	1
Vanaprasthasrama Dharma	3
'For your Hardness of Heart...'	6
Reflections on Corped by WCC Staff	10
Council for Mission and Evangelism	13
Velcom Programme	14
First Conference of C.S.I. Ordained Women	15

Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.

The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

NOVEMBER 1994

EDITOR

REV. P. C. DASS BABU

MIGN DEEP APARTMENTS

MAYURI MARG

BEGUMPET

HYDRABAD-500 016. (A.P.) PHONE: 847436

HON. BUSINESS MANAGER

PROF. GEORGE KOSHY, General Secretary

Synod C.S.I. Centre

5, WHITES ROAD

ROYAPETTAH, MADRAS-600 014

Phone : 8521566

All remittances and communications regarding subscriptions and advertisements to be sent to the Hon. Business Manager.

HON. AGENT IN U.K.

Rev. J. L. Thomas, Bronheulwen Chapel Lawn Road

Becknell, Shropshire SY 7 0AH, UK

Tel. No. 05 474 675

RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION PER ANNUM

Subscription in India	Rs. 35.00
Single Copy	Rs. 4.00

SUBSCRIPTION OVERSEAS

	<i>Sea Mail</i>	<i>Air Mail</i>
U. S. A. ..	\$ 10.00	\$ 15.00
U. K. ..	£ 5.00	£ 10.00
Australia ..	\$ 10.00	\$ 20.00
New Zealand ..	\$ 10.00	\$ 20.00

25 Years Ago!

The C.S.I. can claim that it has experienced in a wonderful measure the blessing of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. For this reason it is anxious to unite with other Churches in South India. It is prepared, if necessary, to accept, along with other Churches, an entirely new organisation which is more in accord with the mind of Christ. We hope and pray that during the coming years God will lead us into a larger union, a fuller understanding of His truth and a more blessed fellowship with all His saints in South India.

—H. SUMITRA

*Bishop and Moderator
South India Churchman '57.*

ADVERTISEMENT TARIFF

Last Page (4th page of the cover)	Rs. 12,000 p.m.
Full Page	Rs. 750 per insertion
Half Page	Rs. 400 ..
Quarter Page	Rs. 200 ..
Minimum	Rs. 150 ..

Hony. Business Manager

Services-sustaining- strategies-mission In South Asia



National Council of Churches in India had organised a consultation on services, sustaining, strategies, Mission in South Asia reconsidered for the church leaders of the SAARC countries with an objective to, as the convener Dr. J.A. Oliver put it, to inspire the leadership of the churches in South Asia to dare act and bear the cross venturing into new frontiers of the millions. Reminding the tragic plight of the millions of people in South Asia, Rev. Dr. Ipe Joseph of the NCC-1, in his welcome speech, urged the churches to commit themselves to organise, educate and develop programmes to help the helpless.

The consultation focussed its attention on several issues which rock the SAARC countries. Predictably the experiences of the hundred participants who shared their stories in the four groups which revealed the grim situations in the respective countries were most uneven, frustrating and disappointing. The abject poverty and the exploitation are the root cause of such deplorable conditions. In spite of many welfare schemes and development projects still 440 million persons in South Asia are poor. This staggering number puts even democracy at risk. The past development response has been inadequate to eradicate poverty over nearly half a century.

However, a more relevant and coherent strategic option based on the lessons of experience in South Asia has emerged in the form of new social contract between the state and the poor. In this process of social mobilisation, organisations of the poor and new kinds of sensitive support mechanisms would implement the strategic options. These mechanisms could be varied, e.g. non-governmental organisations, banks for the poor, cooperatives etc. The state would provide the enabling policy framework, resources and devolve power to the poor. If this has to be implemented in a sustainable way the poor have to be motivated, mobilised and organised in a proper way. Their participation in whichever form is a must. A key element of the strategy has to be to mobilise the savings

of the poor themselves as a first step. The investment activity of the poor is effected mainly not in the form of monetary instruments but as asset creation by transforming labour into capital. (Dr. Wignaraja) combined with proper organisation, it can help unleash new forces leading to efficient asset creation.

The 'Sharing' and 'Caring' characteristics of the poor in South Asia and the values of 'Simplicity and Frugality' can reinforce such an effort. It is imperative for the poor to get into the mainstream of national life to alleviate poverty primarily, to begin with, and then lend their support to the nation building. Problems like food, security, peace, preservation of ecological balance etc., have a national dimension and can be solved only through national effort. Such compulsions make it incumbent on the part of the ethnic minorities to realise that they can concretise their aspirations by being in the mainstream but not by opting out of it (Dr. Abel).

An essential prerequisite of the poverty eradication is the human development. Some models of community-oriented development including Gandhian concept of village development and Gandhian understanding of economics were remembered. The village was for Gandhi the symbol of human dignity and of cherished moral values. Its contemporary condition in India and in the other neighbouring countries characterised by fear, unemployment, exploitation was an aberration that had to be corrected. By contrast, urban industrial settlements were considered by him parasitical and a menace not only to the village but to all that is good, moral and noble in people. Several leaders (Mr. L.C. Jain and Dr. B.C. Muthiayya, especially) evoked an image of the self sufficient village lying at the very heart of India's past cultural and educational life. Since nearly 80% of the total population is predominantly rural, concerted efforts to liberate village life from the clutches of selfish people and exploitative structures is a must. Stagnant agriculture,

rising population, epidemics, famines, land alienation, poverty etc. are some of the major problems which demand church's attention. Church and the other voluntary agencies need to reshape their policies and programmes for a total transformation to usher in a new era in the socio-cultural and economic life of the poor, particularly those who live in villages.

The Nazareth Manifesto of Jesus has to be re-read and re-discovered; his area, the poor; his instruments, the disciples; his method, the suffering need to be interpreted to the 'cries of the people'. (Prof. K. Rajaratnam) Mission of the church is to communicate the good news to all—to the poor and the exploited; this includes human rights and environmental protection also. Church in India needs to address itself on its theology which should be relevant to the situation in which millions of people groups in dark without any sense of direction. Theology of human development is the need of the hour. Due importance should be given to the local congregations or the base

communities and motivate them with the fourfold ministry—worship, nurture, proclamation and development. (Prof. K. Rajaratnam).

The role of the Church would first be to stimulate people at grass root level to draw up their priorities in problem solving and then to help them financially by providing organisation support. Churches are called to play the advocacy role and organise programmes to lend the helping hand to the millions of the people who are confused, who are living in a state of depression, helplessness, constraint fear and pain. The strength of the prayer, of hope, affirmation, creativity and empowerment which are assured by the Holy Spirit are the guiding principles for the Churches to forge ahead with the new obedience.

—DASS BABU

GURUKUL LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE & RESEARCH INSTITUTE

(Affiliated to Senate of Serampore)

Madras-600 010.

Announces admissions into the following courses for the Academic Year 1995-'96

I. MASTER OF THEOLOGY (M.Th.)

in the following branches:

- A. Religions
Christian Theology
New Testament*
Communication*
(*Subject to Senate's approval)
- B. Women Studies — offered as a new area of study through the above mentioned branches.
- C. Dalit Theology will be offered as an Intergrated/Interdisciplinary Course in the above branches.

II. BACHELOR OF DIVINITY (B.D.)

- ✱ For graduates from any recognised University.
- ✱ For B.Th. graduates who have I or II class with a pass in Qualifying English Papers and with one year gap.

Prospectus and Application forms for admission can be obtained on payment of Rs. 25/ plus Rs. 3/- towards postal expenses. Limited seats available.

LAST DATE for receiving the filled-in Application Forms by the College will be JANUARY 1995

Apply to :

The REGISTRAR
Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute,
94, Purasawalkam High Road, Kilpauk,
Madras-600 010. INDIA.

Vanaprasthasrama Dharma

A Programme of Renewal and Religion as Realisation for Retired people

BISHOP P. VICTOR PREMASAGAR, SECUNDERABAD

P. Chenchiah a judge in Pudukottai, V. Chakkarai a lawyer and A.N. Suderisanam an outstanding laymen in Madras wrote *Asramas Past and Present*, Indian Christian Book Club, Kilpauk, Madras 1944. These three together with G.V. Job a renowned Headmaster, A.J. Appaswamy, later the first Bishop in CSI Coimbatore Diocese, were known as the 'Madras Rethinking Group'. They wrote several stimulating theological writings from the Indian religious perspective. These were mostly new converts with deep learning in the Hindu scriptures, religion and culture and expressed their new found faith in Christ in terms of the Indian religious and cultural heritage. They articulated Indian Christian theology in forties and fifties challenging the then missionary methods and the church's theology. Chenchiah challenged Hendrick Kraemer's 'continuity-discontinuity' concept in Mission at the Tambaram International Missionary Conference, Madras in 1938.

This book was written upon the suggestion of C.F. Andrews, who was associated with Mahatma Gandhi, when they were together at the Tirupattur Asram with Doctors Paton and Savirarayan, founders of this asram. Chenchiah bases his work on an extensive research of the Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads, the epics Ramayana and Mahabharatha, the Bhagavata, Siva and other Puranas, the Manu and other Sutras. Chakkarai studies this topic from the Tamil religious and cultural heritage. They suggested that the Vanaprasthasrama dharma has creative potential for adaptation by the Christians in India.

According to the ancient Indian religious tradition, life was divided into four stages (asramas):

1. *Brahmacharya*—The student stage—studied the Vedas and cultivated continence.
2. *Grihasta*—The householder stage—maintained family, performed rituals, acquired wealth, served society and practised hospitality.

The first two stages were acquisitory — acquiring knowledge and wealth.

3. *Vanaprastha*—The forest dwelling—discarded property and attachments, moved to the forests, meditated in pursuit of union with the Brahman.

4. *Sanyasa*—The wandering stage—having attained spiritual realisation, wandered in the society, ministering to the needs of people in the first two stages.

The last two stages were renunciatory—renouncing possessions and developing an attitude of non-attachment, abandoning oneself to be united with God.

Vanaprasthasrama dharma was a development in opposition to Buddhism and Jainism, teaching total renunciation and celibacy, which had struck a severe blow to the family life and to the society as a whole. Instead, they suggested that people should keep the four asramas in that order, for stabilising family life and the society. The asrama movement started as a lay protest by *Kshatriyas* like Buddha, Mahavira and others against the Brahmanical ritualistic and authoritarian religion. It was a lay movement searching for freedom in the forests and meditation on major issues of life.

Vanaprasthasrama dharma was introduced as the third stage in one's life after Brahmacharya and Grihasta. At the time of retirement they went into the forests and dedicated themselves to *tapas* and pursuit of union with *Brahman* and realisation of religion. The husband and wife left their home in the city or village, left their properties and possessions to their children and moved into the forests, developed an attitude of non-attachment and sought to find answers for the burning issues that had bothered them in the earlier stages of their lives.

Chenchiah observes that the Church's ministry aims at the Brahmacharya and Grihasta stages but does not serve the retired people. The freedom of the Vanaprastha, experimentation in spirituality, the yogic discipline and experiencing religion as realisation, are not taken into account by the Christian ministry. The retired people are considered to be of no use. The church has no programme for them, except providing homes for the aged expecting the end, but has not seen retirement as a stage when

further spiritual progress could be made. Lack of such a vision, makes the old reluctant to quit, retire and detach themselves from their possessions and leave them to their children and younger people. Without a positive dynamic programme for the retired, they continue with an attached attitude, unwanted by the society and family, living in frustration and without purpose in life. Retirement is not the end of life. Life does not just slip out of hand, but has to be held by both the hands and explored further into the depths of spirituality. The fulness of life should be experienced at this stage also.

The problems and possibilities of retired life are not discussed in the New Testament. Jesus died as a young man and so the religious perception moved on to death and resurrection, without any reference to retired life and old age. Several of the apostles were martyred while in active ministry. Only St. John seems to have survived till a ripe old age in Ephesus. It is interesting to note that St. John who had the experience of retired life, spoke of the union between the believer and God. The book of Revelations is perhaps an account of his visions on the island of Patmos in his advanced age. St. Paul in his epistles, written at the later stage of his life, speaks of 'life in Christ', visions and revelations of the Lord, Paradise, the third heaven and mystic experience in the spirit (2 Cor. 12 : 1-4). These are perhaps indications of spiritual perfection through union with the divine, similar to the perceptions of the Vanaprasthasramites.

Chenchiah suggests that retired people could take up Vanaprasthasrama dharma and experience new purpose in life. It is the continuation of Grihasta but with mature relationship between husband and wife, both seeking salvation through non-attachment, meditation and yoga. The four stages of life are related to the biological development of the humans. There is a positive acceptance of the age of retirement. There is no rejection of the Grihasta but a growth into mature relationship with age, transcending the earlier relationship of passion. Age does not prevent people from meditation, yoga and study of scriptures, and achieving union with God as an inner experience of salvation. Religion is seen not as a future hope but as a present realisation, a deep experience of the spirit, and the kingdom of God.

The Church, Chenchiah says, with its sacramental, authoritarian and dogma bound traditions, cannot provide the freedom and the necessary atmosphere for the Vanaprasthasrama dharma. Religion realised could be the time when the sacramental and repetitive services of the Christian ministry are no longer needed as the believer aims at attaining the perfection as that of the farther, of which Jesus had spoken to his disciples. St. Paul expresses it as growing into maturity (Mt. 5:48; Phil. 3:12).

The asrama life with respect for nature, animals, birds and humans, developed *Ahimsa* (non-killing) as its governing principle. The non-attachment in the third stage of life developed the doctrine of *Nishkama Karma* (action without desiring reward) as the way of salvation to overcome *Karma Samsara*. Yoga was a lay protest against the sacrificial and ritualistic religion of the *Brahmins*. They discovered that Yoga was superior to the Brahmanic priestcraft. Ashtanga Yoga developed in the asramas points to the eight stages through which a yogi progresses to experience salvation.

- (a) *Yama*—abstinence from injury, theft, incontinence and greed.
- (b) *Niyama*—Engage in such positive duties as cleanliness of body and mind, contentment, austerity, study of scriptures, devotion to God.
- (c) *Asana*—Bodily postures in yoga—the posture should be steady and easy (*Sthira sukham asanam*).
- (d) *Pranayama*—Restraint of breath, control of breathing as a kind of sacrifice offered by some ascetics. They advocate a level of steady breathing during meditation.
- (e) *Prathyahara*—The turning aside of the senses and mind from outside objects to achieve inner concentration.
- (f) *Dharana*—Concentration. The soul is at rest in the thought of God.
- (g) *Dhyana*—Meditation and contemplation.
- (h) *Samadhi*—A state of ecstasy in which the thought of God (*Brahman*) wholly occupies the consciousness.

Vanaprasthasrama dharma thus provided a movement of the spirit, growth into maturity and realisation of union with the *Brahman*. The experience of the struggles in life and professional skills developed in the first two stages, coupled with yogic meditation and study of scriptures, led to new ways of understanding the reality and realising the faith experience.

With improved health conditions and longevity, many women and men are able to live long retired lives. They find no future for themselves in their communities. Detachment and deep meditation, the experience and realisation of the spirit life could be most creative for retired people, helping them to concentrate on issues related to Brahmacharya and Grihasta, find answers and thus make a positive contribution to literature, art, music and even to secular disciplines like political, economic, social spheres, and scientific discoveries for the benefit of the society as a whole. Vanaprasthasrama dharma could initiate a new and exciting future for retired people, helping them to lay bare the most hidden secrets of life—the spirit of *Asanga* (non-attachment), *Ahimsa* (non-killing, and respect for life), *Yoga* discipline, meditation and religion as realisation.

Asramas provided a perennial source of rejuvenation and replenishment to the ancient Indian religion and society. Chenchiah outlines the following contributions that the asramas made to Hinduism and Indian Culture:

1. Animal sacrifices were abandoned and the lighting of fire in the asrama detached from sacrifice become the central act. Priests and sacrifices were replaced by *rishis* (men of wisdom) and *tapas* (intense concentration and meditation).
2. The forest dwellers dared in their yogic meditations, to aspire to be one with the ultimate self—the *Brahman*. The discipline of yoga was developed as part of meditation. St. John's 'union with Christ', and St. Paul's 'life in Christ', points to a similar understanding of religion as realisation.
3. Religious literature flowed out of the forests. The Upanishads and the Sutras by the sages, the epics Ramayana by Valmiki, Mahabharata, Gita and Bhagavatapurana by Vedavyasa, Brahmasutras by Badarayana, Arthasasthra by Kautilya, all came out of the asramas. A new literary paedagogical method of teaching intricate theological and philosophical ideas through legend and story was developed.
4. Rulers, politicians, scientists, teachers, poets and musicians brought with them in retirement, their secular interests to the forests, studied the environment, the behaviour of animals and birds, their diseases and discovered medicines—for example *Hastiyurveda* (the science of elephant diseases), *Asvayurveda* (the science of horse diseases), *Sarpa vidya* (serpent antidots), the psychology and science of breath and yoga. The murmur of the flowing rivers, the songs of birds and the rhythms in the atmosphere and nature, helped them to develop the intricacies of Indian Music.
5. Asramas engaged in a ministry of reconciliation—domesticating wild animals in the forests, establishing contacts with the tribals and thereby created a new ethos of relations with these ancient and indigenous cultures. They commended the Aryan civilisation to the tribals by incorporating their own religious ideas, enlarged their pantheon, introducing new gods into their religion and that of the tribals.
6. Asramas served as the theological institutions of ancient Hinduism. The *Gurukula* system of education was developed with yoga and the education of the young for life. *Guru*—the teacher was not merely the one who explained and enlightened, but was the imparter of spiritual life, which he himself had experienced.
7. Asramas rejected the social discriminations that were rampant in the ancient Indian social structure. Caste and all other walls of partition that had divided the

society were broken down. As they were all together in the forests, engaged in pursuit of the spirit and union with the *Brahman*, all achievements of the Grihasta, the distinctions of rank and honourofics were discarded.

8. In the forest meditations, the *rishis* discussed the problem of inspiration and authority of the scriptures and revelation. They argued that inspiration did not end with the classical age of the Vedas (*Sruti*, heard literature), but continued wherever women and men were willing to meditate and discover deeper secrets of spiritual life. Thus they propounded the concept of progressive revelation, included the Upanishads as containing revelation of God and gave them same authority as that of the Vedas.

A similar contribution could be made through encouraging retired people to take up the order of vanaprastha. This process has immense possibilities for renewal and cultural appreciation of the Christian gospel and release new life of living in the spirit.

I would like to suggest the following action plan for encouraging Vanaprasthasrama dharma among retired people:

- (i) That Chenchiah's book be reprinted and translated into the major Indian languages and published.
- (ii) Initially the concept and practice of Vanaprasthasrama dharma be popularised through seminars and workshops in different places for retired people.
- (iii) A special course be prepared to introduce meditation, study and Yoga in its eight stages. A one month programme be arranged for retired people in batches throughout the year. *Asanga*, *Ahimsa* and *Yoga* could be practised at home also during the rest of the year. There be refresher programmes each year to encourage and share experiences.
- (iv) Study of scriptures—Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and other faiths and modern religious movements, to encourage dialogue in the Vanaprasthasramas. Experiments in new ways of imparting religious truths through story telling, art, painting, drama, songs and poetry be initiated. Illustrations from Indian religious literature be used to explain Christian faith and teachings of the scriptures. A library with religious literature in English and regional languages be developed.
- (v) An asrama with facilities be developed as centre for imparting the experience of Vanaprasthasrama dharma throughout the year.
- (vi) Vanaprasthasrama dharma be included in theological education. A spirit of *Asanga*, *Ahimsa* and *Ashtanga Yoga* be introduced to the ordinands and other Christian leaders, for their spiritual growth and effective service.

'For your Hardness of Heart...'*

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION

DR. GNANA ROBINSON, U.T.C., Bangalore

'For Your Hardness of Heart.....' (Matthew 19:8a)

The women, who constitute half of the human community all through history, have been denied of the privilege of serving the Church as ordained ministers purely because of gender difference. In order to justify such a gross, unjust discrimination, the male leadership of the Church has put forward biological, sociological, theological and biblical reasons. Among these, obviously, the biblical reasons have played a vital role in keeping women away from the privilege of ordination.

After several centuries of women's agitation and protest against such a discrimination, churches slowly began to open their doors for women's ordination, first in the west and then in the east, in many cases rather reluctantly. In many churches, there is so much of unhappiness over the issue, and many Christians, most of whom coming from the pietistic background, resist it. Many of these Christians are Bible lovers, and for them every letter and every punctuation in the Bible are divinely inspired and therefore every belief and practice in the Church should be supported by biblical teaching, and women's ordination is no exception to it. Quite legitimately they look for biblical legitimation for women's ordination and soon become convinced, along with some early Church Fathers, that the Bible provides no justification for women's ordination.

Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, says,

'Never anywhere has any woman, not even Eve, acted as priest from the beginning of the world'.¹

Tertullian says,

'It is not permitted to women to speak in Church, or to teach, or to baptize, or to offer, or to lay claim to a man's function or to the priestly office'.²

Several other Church leaders have spoken in a similar vein. So we turn to the Bible and here we notice that the discrimination and subordination of women to men are effected by three basic assumptions:

* Address given at the 'Conference of Ordained Women' at the CSI Synod Centre in Madras on August 18, 1994.

(i) Man is superior to women.

(ii) Woman is unclean and contact with her pollutes men and other objects.

(iii) Woman is weak. She is vulnerable to temptations.

In support of these, several arguments are given from the Bible —

(i) Man was created first, only then woman.

(ii) Woman was created from a rib of man.

(iii) Woman yielded to temptation and became the first sinner.

According to the Old Testament Law women are unclean and holy people and holy objects should not come into contact with them. Further, the following texts are quoted from the New Testament:

'The head of the woman (is) the man' 1 Cor. 11:3

'The women should keep silence in the Churches. For they should be subordinate, as even the Law says... For it is shameful for a woman to speak in Church.'
1 Cor. 14:34-35

'Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor'.
1 Tim. 2:11-14

'(It is) good for a man not to touch a woman'

1 Cor. 7:11

The levitical laws on clean and unclean, which regarded menstruation and sexual intercourse as unclean, have contributed to the discrimination of woman as an untouchable in sacred places.

Thus, we see arguments in the Bible, arising out of an entirely different context, are held still valid for our times by Christians who have a wrong approach to the Bible. They cite these texts in order to legitimise their arguments to keep women out of ordained ministry. It is for this reason, I have said in an article of mine, that the Bible should be first liberated from its out of context treatment, if it has to become a liberative scripture.³

The Bible as a literary work has grown over a period of several centuries and its different literary units have had their own living contexts. So, a particular thought, belief or practice in the Bible has had its own context, conditioned by the socio-political and religio-cultural thought patterns of the time and the place of the context, in which it arose and a particular belief or practice should therefore be understood only from that background. What I mean here may be illustrated by the way Jesus interpreted His Scripture, which was the Old Testament. Read Matthew 5:21ff. We come across the following form of Jesus' sayings:

'You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill....', but I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother is liable to judgment....' (vv. 21-22). 'You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery....', but I say to you that every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her....' (vv. 27-28).

He goes on like this.

Jesus interprets and adapts every law of the Old Testament to His own context, and He also explains why this should be done so.

In Deuteronomy 24:1-4, the author, who, according to the traditions, was Moses, allows the divorce of a woman, if her husband finds some indecency in her. All that the husband has to do is to write 'a bill of divorce' and put it in her hand. But, Jesus in His own context sanctifies marriage and says, 'What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder' (Matt. 19:6). In response to this the Jews cite the above Deuteronomic law and asks, 'Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?' In answer to this Jesus says, 'For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives....' (Matt. 19:8).

From this it becomes quite clear that every text in the Bible has its own context. A particular text in a given context may so appear as it does now, may be because of the hardness of heart of the concerned people, may be because of their lack of understanding or because of some other reasons. Because some text is found in the Bible, it does not automatically become scripture for our time, though it might have served as scripture to the readers of its original context. In order to draw the message of such a text for our context, we should study that text contextually and find out what it meant to its original readers and from that we should draw what message it has to our own context.

Viewing the Bible from such a perspective, much of what has been said negatively of women in the Bible can be described in the words of the Lord as 'because of the hardness of heart' of a male chauvinistic Israelite community and they should not be seen as the external word of God for us today.

St. Paul's beliefs and practices also were conditioned by the context in which he lived. He naturally shared most of the beliefs of his contemporaries, though, by inspiration and revelation, at many points, he breaks through his context and looks beyond and forward. Remember his attitude to slavery. He could not reject it; he shares the social structure of his time and admonishes Onesimus, the run-away slave, to return to his master Philemon and to submit to him. But he breaks through this cultural framework of his time when he appeals to Philemon, the master, to treat Onesimus 'no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, as a beloved brother' (Philemon 1:16). In a similar way, St. Paul's views on women are also conditioned by his own context. He accepts the beliefs and practices of the people of his own time, still breaks through his cultural framework when he stresses the mutuality and inter-dependence of men and women in saying 'woman is not independent of man nor man of woman' (1 Cor. 11:11) and when he appeals to men to love their wives as their own flesh (Eph. 5:28).

2. 'But from the Beginning it was not so' (Matthew 19:8b)

While refuting the dominant traditions in the Bible on the basis of which men discriminated against women, Jesus, by saying 'but from the beginning it was not so', implies that God's will as regards the treatment of women has to be sought elsewhere, outside these obvious, dominant traditions in the Bible.

Here I wish to say a word about the idea of 'revelation' in the Bible. Normally, cultural traditions are dominated and controlled by the ruling class in the society and it is seldom that we hear God's voice through these traditions. Much of what we get in these traditions are conformistic in character and they try to legitimise the existing structures and practices. Revelation is something which comes as a splash shining beyond our limits, breaking through our cultural framework and leading us towards the ultimate truth. It comes as a light in darkness. Something which is not known in the existing context, something which a person in a normal context could never think of, when such a thing is brought to the knowledge of people, that we call revelation. Such a revelation comes through what the Bible calls 'the still small voice of God' (cf 1 Kings 19:13) in history. Through such still small voices in the Bible, we are able to see that we have enough evidences in the Bible to prove that women too are useful instruments in the hand of God—just like men and that they both were created equally.

We know, there are two creation accounts in the Bible. According to the priestly account, found in Genesis 1:1-2:4, God created the human being Adam, male and female. The human being Adam is a gender-inclusive person; in saying male and female, there is no hierarchical

order. That is why the second creation account says, 'Adam and Eve, as male and female "become one flesh"' (Gen. 2:24). Male and female, when they are thus united as one flesh, there is no place for inequality and discrimination. A man or a woman, standing alone, do not constitute the human person 'Adam'; both taken together alone can be designated as 'human' in the Biblical sense.

When we read through the Bible, we meet several women who are used by God in His salvation history, though it is possible that the male-dominated history could have suppressed the stories of many such women. Miriam, the sister of Aaron, was known as 'The Prophetess' (Ex. 15:20), which means, she should have had some sort of divine ordination. Deborah, another prophetess, was judging Israel 'as a mother' (Judges 4:4; 5:7). This means, she was having authority over both men and women in the whole of Israel; the question of subordination of women to men plays no role there. The stories of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8-16) and the maid of Naaman's wife (2 Kings 5:3) show us how even socially handicapped women were used as instruments of God. The stories of the Books of Ruth and Esther also indicate that women played key roles in the salvation history of Israel, which speaks clearly against the assumption that God intended women to be subordinate to men.

Coming to the New Testament, we must admit that Jesus too lived in a male-dominated society and much of what He said and did was deflected through the prism of this society. The prominence given to the twelve male disciples and the leadership roles assigned to them should be understood against this background. The odd conditions of travel in those times and the sexual proprieties of all times could have also been a reason why Jesus did not choose a woman for His closer circle.⁴

Still we have ample evidences from the teachings of Jesus to show that He made no distinction between men and women. He had disciples of both sexes; there was a group of women who came down with the men from Galilee and accompanied Jesus wherever He went and ministered unto Him (Matt. 27:55; Luke 23:41,55). Luke mentions the names of a few who moved very closely with Jesus—Mary, called Magdalene, Joanna, the wife of Chuza and Susanna (Luke 8:1-3).

By allowing sinful and unclean women to touch Him, Jesus set aside all the traditional taboos laid down by law which discriminated against women. In the house of Simon, a woman, who was known to the public as a sinner, wet Jesus' feet with tears and wiped them with her hair, kissed them and anointed them with ointment (Luke 7:36-50). In another instance, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, was healed by coming into physical contact with Jesus. Menstrual flow of blood was seen in the Old Testament as unclean, and because of this woman was

asked to keep herself away from men and holy places for several days, because of the fear that by coming into contact with others, she polluted them, defiled them. But, something quite opposite happens here. The woman with the flow of blood touches the Holy Person, Jesus, and this touch, this physical contact, instead of polluting Jesus, draws the holy power for itself and gets healed. Jesus says, 'Some one has touched me, for I perceive that power has gone forth from me' (Luke 8:46). This shows, that in Jesus all those traditions of taboos and uncleanness, which so far kept women away from normal life with men, are removed. Jesus, the Holy One, thus becomes accessible both to men and women equally. It is in this sense, St. Paul could say that in Jesus there is no male and female (Gal. 3:28) and stress the inter-dependence of men and women (1 Cor. 11:11).

3. 'Behold....the Handmaid of the Lord' (Luke 1:38): Mary the Ordained

If by ordination we mean the calling and the setting apart of a person for some special ministry, we may say with certainty, Mary, the mother of Jesus, is among those who were ordained by God for a special ministry, the ministry of bearing and bringing up the Son of God. All important elements of ordination are found in the account of Mary. She received the call of God through the angel Gabriel; she was assured of the gift of the Holy Spirit and Mary accepted the call of God saying 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord' (Luke 1:38). Thus Mary became the model for every woman to be ordained.

Nothing of the taboos and restrictions laid down by law and tradition could stand in between Mary and God. This woman stood before God worthy of receiving His holy spirit, not through ritual purifications, nor by the merit of man or husband, but purely on her own merit and by the grace of God. Mary became the recipient of the Holy Spirit, which is the sign of ordination.

The most important thing here is the response of Mary, her total sub-mission to the will of God. 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord'. This, I believe, should be the only condition placed before women for ordination. All other objections or pre-conditions, whether biblical, theological or otherwise, have no validity. Any woman, who is convinced of the call of God and is willing to submit herself to the will of God, is eligible for ordained ministry.

Mary's ministry did not stop with giving birth to the child Jesus and bringing Him up. Though nothing much is said about her future activities, from the few references we have in the New Testament, we can infer that she accompanied the ministry of Jesus as a quiet follower. We meet her at the marriage in Cana; later Mary and the

brothers of Jesus meet Him in a place; she was among those women who followed Jesus up to the Cross. Lastly we meet her along with the community of believers who witnessed to the resurrected Lord and assembled in the upper room in Jerusalem to pray (Acts 1:14). Thus, Mary was part of the early Christian community, the early Church. She was the first among the ordained women in the Church to be called and set apart for a special task.

4. 'The mind of Jesus': The only basis for Gender Equality

Will ordination of women alone solve the problem? Of course not! I have been observing the conditions of ordained women both in India and abroad and I have talked to quite a few of them as to how they feel about their position. It is a fact, that even among clergy, in many places, there is discrimination against women. In many churches they are not treated on par with men. Women's ordination is not whole-heartedly accepted in a male dominated ecclesiastical hierarchy. Gender equality among ordained clergy is not to be expected, as long as there is no gender equality in the society.

We are glad, several movements of men and women are today fighting for gender equality in various fields. In fact, the origin of these movements goes back to biblical times and even beyond. The very fact, that St. Paul repeatedly appeals to women to obey their men, indicates that there were many women in his time who protested against male domination and strived for gender equality.

As a result of these feminist and womanistic struggles, we are glad, things are slowly changing, but in many instances at the expense of the sanctity of the family. Father, mother and children constitute the family, the basic social unit, and this basic social structure is today breaking down where gender equality is insisted upon. Therefore, the question we have to consider is, how can we achieve gender equality, without endangering the sanctity of the family?

Here, both the genders have to acknowledge and accept the basic biological factor that the male enjoys certain advantages over the female. First, men enjoy in general more muscular power than women, and in many instances, this muscular power is misused to dominate and exploit women. It is a tragic fact that in India there are many educated men, including clergy, who beat their wives, and these wives being faithful to the traditional 'Culture of silence' keep silent, for fear of increased violence from the husband and also for the sake of safe-guarding the family prestige. Secondly, the men in

general have a rough and coarse voice, which they use to shout at women to silence their soft and feeble voices. Thirdly, because of pregnancy, women stand exposed to violence, shame and danger and she is not able to move freely in societies where there are people who follow the laws of the jungle.

By rational arguments and laws, women may succeed in establishing their rights and securing equal privileges such as equal representation to conferences and meetings, but unless men accept these conditions willingly and abstain from mis-using their advantages against women, the harmonious relationship between men and women becomes difficult.

It is therefore important that in a Christian approach to gender equality, we listen to St. Paul and have the mind of Jesus in us. In Philippians 2:5-6, Paul says, '*Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant...*' in order to fulfil the purpose of God in redeeming the humanity.

St. Paul compares the relationship of a husband and a wife to the relationship between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:32), which was possible only because of 'the mind of Jesus', because of His 'Kenosis', emptying of Himself.

In gender relation, man, having the mind of Jesus, should abstain from using his masculine power, rough voice and his privileged position, to exploit and discriminate against woman. He should empty himself of his superiority complex and adopt 'love' as the only basis for his relationship with woman. Only this way equality between genders can be achieved in the society as well as in the Church, including ordained ministry, 'Love does not insist on its own way' (1 Cor. 13:5). This applies both to men and women. When both accept this as the basis of their relationship and abstain from insisting one's advantage over the other, gender equality can be attained without endangering the sanctity of the family structure.

1 Quoted by Sr. Vincent Emmanuel Hannon, in: *The Question of Women and the Priesthood*, Geoffrey Chapman, London,, 1967, p. 35.

2 Ibid., p. 34.

3 Gnana Robinson, 'Liberated Bible, Liberative Scripture', Keynote Address, UTC Refresher Course, October 31, 1993.

4 Georgia Harkness, *Woman in Church and Society*, Nashville Abingdon Press, New York, 1972, p. 216f.

Reflections on Corped by WCC Staff

Dr. W. A. F. HOPPER*

Introduction

Prof. George Koshy, General Secretary, CSI Synod made it possible for me to have a breakfast-meeting with Mr. Samuel Isaac, Deputy Director WCC in October 1993 in Madras. Mr. Isaac was impressed by the Education Ministry of the CSI in the area of Rural Primary Education. He invited me to come over to WCC, Geneva and spend a few days in May 1994 inter-acting with Heads of Departments and certain other specialists interested and involved in the various ministries of the member churches in the world.

It was the first time for me to visit WCC. I was overwhelmed by the size of the establishment. The library was excellent and I spent an hour or so each day there. I was shown the place where Dr. Sam Amirtham used to sit. (He had invited me to conduct a workshop on Educational Taxonomy to his colleagues and staff from other Theological Colleges at TTS, Madurai where he was the Principal. This happened about 25 years back!). Dr. Christopher Duraisingh and Dr. H.S. Wilson were away on tour and therefore I could not renew my fellowship with them.

Mr. Sam Isaac had planned discussions with some of his colleagues. Some of them had to leave Geneva all of a sudden for an important meeting elsewhere. However, I could meet Rev. David Philpot, Mr. Terry Pirri Simoniam, Dr. (Mrs.) Salwa Morcus, Mr. Israel Batista, Dr. Kyung Seo Park and Dr. Judo Poerwowidagdo at the WCC. (I could also meet Ms. Regina Samuel and Ms. Agneta Ucko at the LWF).

I had taken with me a set of colour photographs depicting the different components of *CORPED* Programme going on in 248 rural communities spread over 19 Dioceses of the CSI. I had also taken with me printed Paradigms which are Conceptual Models used by us for conducting Training Courses for rural school teachers and animators appointed by us in the villages and also for conducting Curriculum Workshops to generate creative materials. The titles of the Paradigms are furnished below:

* Dr. W.A.F. Hopper, M.Sc., M.Ed., Ph.D., AIE, (Lond.), Cert. Sc. Edn. (Ohio) is the Director of CSI Synod Council for Education based at Madras.

1. Information Network Model in a rural community.
2. Integrated Environmental Studies Curriculum for Primary School Education.
3. Eco-based Teaching-Learning activities in Science Education for standards III to V.
4. Eco-based Teaching-Learning activities in Mathematics Education for standards I to III.
5. Eco-based Work Sheets in Mathematics Education for standards I to III.
6. Eco-based Teaching-Learning Activities in Social Studies Education for standards III to V.
7. Eco-approach for Integrated Curriculum Development for Education of Tiny-Tots (age group: 3-5 years) in villages.
8. Environmental Education Programme for Schools, Colleges, Communities and Congregations.
9. Components of Eco-awareness Programme (Greening the Minds of People).
10. Approaches to Baby's (Age: 0 to 3) Education at Home in the context of Parents' Education Programme.

Interested readers abroad may write to Mr. Sam Isaac of WCC, Geneva and get copies of the above. Readers in India, who would like to get copies may write to the author. The copies are also included in the printed report of the Visit of the author to Ecumenical Churches and Resource Agencies for a month from 15th April 1994.

Role of Church Schools

It seems there is a debate going on in the WCC about the possible roles of the church school in the third world countries. Why should an Ecumenical Church be managing rural church schools in the area of Primary School Education? Many world church leaders felt that some of the answers may be forthcoming from the EZE-sponsored Project (No. 90168) designated as *CORPED* and facilitated by the CSI Synod Council for Education. *CORPED* stands for Comprehensive Rural Primary School Education Development. This programme is initiated through the church school located amidst the marginalised

and deprived community (dalith community) in a village. The church school is considered as an *Entry Point* for the Education Mission of the church. What is the Vision of the church in this vital area of its Ministry for the poorest of the poor? The Vision is TOWARDS LIBERATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE COMMUNITIES of our concern indicated above from a holistic perspective through meaningful and relevant education.

Already some of the possible roles of a Rural church School have crystallised out. They are the following:

- (a) formation of Networks between local Congregation, local Community and local School.
- (b) mobilisation of Parents (focus on the mother) to be involved in the education of their children at school and themselves.
- (c) establishing a Community Education Centre (CEC) to be managed by a woman-Animator from the neighbourhood.
- (d) organising an Information Resource Centre (IRC) for the benefit of the people in the community.
- (e) making available the school buildings for the local congregation and local community to organise a variety of development-oriented meetings.

Education for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

The Paradigm on Social Studies Education attracted the attention of the world church leaders. It had the following components:

- ✧ Towards Unity and Diversity.
- ✧ Towards interdependence of all Creation.
- ✧ Towards Formation of One-Earth Community.

The Paradigm had also provided interactions inside class-room and outside class-room for the following:

- ✧ Interaction with People.
- ✧ Interaction with Diverse Environments.
- ✧ Interaction with Media.
- ✧ Interaction with Developmental Institutions and Agencies.
- ✧ Interaction with Governments.
- ✧ Interaction with Cultural Patterns.

In brief, the Social Studies Education Programme envisaged by the Council is 'Towards Formation of Human Values' among the school children. One of the WCC staff remarked that if it happened, it would result in the formation of Ecumenical Learning Communities taking up Social Issues for reflection and action.

Ecological Concerns in Education

The discussion with Dr. Israel Batista at WCC was very lively indeed. We wish we had more time at our disposal (He had to catch the plane and therefore we could spend about 30 minutes only). He was so happy to learn about the involvement of CSI in Eco-concerns. The two paradigms developed by the Council on Eco-concerns were highly commended. The work being done in Greening the Minds of People in terms of Eco-Vision, Eco-Reflection, Eco-Action and Eco-Sustainability was well received by WCC. The creative Eco-Methodologies adopted by the Council were also much appreciated.

- ✧ Eco-Friendly Approaches.
- ✧ Culture-Friendly Approaches.
- ✧ Eco-Education Approaches in terms of Probing about/through/for the Environment.

The Environmental Studies Approach for Curriculum Development in the CORPED schools was a novel one. It was felt that many Ecumenical Churches in the third-world countries could critically study the Curriculum Models and adopt them to their Eco-Contexts.

Education for Human Resources Development (HRD)

HRD from the holistic perspective is one of the areas of concern of the WCC. The paradigm on HRD developed by the Council as a result of field-work among the teachers and children in our CORPED schools was discussed. The following points were noted with great interest as they were rooted on theological foundations which were focussed by WCC.

- ✧ Every human had hidden potential which have to be drawn out through the process of appropriate congenial learning environments.
- ✧ Every human had the capacity for development.
- ✧ The Human Potential plus Training resulted in HRD.
- ✧ Participatory Learning (Peer Group Learning-PGL) is Learning Together. This developed human values of Caring and Sharing.
- ✧ Education is not neutral. It is value-based. Therefore, Education could be planned to result in HRD in Cognitive, Affective and Psycho-motor domains of development.

Education for Community Development

It was very interesting for the WCC experts to learn that the Community Education Centre (CEC) established in a CORPED school is not a building but a live operational concept. The CEC was managed by a young woman

animator who has her home among her people in the marginalised community where the CORPED school itself is located. She had basic education for about 10 to 12 years in a village school. She represents the local congregation and local community together. She has been given training on various components of Community Education by the Education Council. She is mainly involved in Tiny-Tots Education, Parents Education and Supportive Education for school children. She organises these at a convenient place but generally it happens in the school premises. Many of the church leaders were appreciating the role of the Woman Animator in Rural Family Education as portrayed in two paradigms developed by the Council. As the task is very large, the animator selects a cluster of 5 to 10 homes and does intensive work with them in the areas of Nutrition Education, Health Education and Environmental Education also.

Conclusion

It was indeed very much heartening that the discussions with the WCC leaders were very much helpful

and encouraging for us in the CSI to be *on the move*. Our Moderator, the Most Reverend Dr. Vasanth P. Dandin had endorsed the following suggestions made by me as a result of the discussions I had with some of the staff of WCC.

- (a) Organising an All-India Ecumenical Church Consultation on: Alternate Teaching-Learning Strategies in Rural Primary and Community Education sponsored by NCCI and WCC.
- (b) Sharing the experiences gained in rural primary education and community education with other ecumenical churches and bodies in the world (more specifically south to south).
- (c) Inviting partner church educationalists to CORPED communities where creative educational work is being carried on for the benefit of the rural people (tiny-tots, children in school, parents, community leaders).
- (d) Exchanging creative Curriculum Material between Ecumenical Church Education Departments/Councils involved in similar ministries among the poor.



PERSONNEL REQUESTED FOR SERVICE

1. Graduate teachers in English and Mathematics, and primary school teachers—in Kiribati, Bangladesh and Solomon Islands.
2. Theological education—Old Testament lecturer for Pacific Theological College, and a tutor for Botswana.
3. Farm Manager for Zambia.
4. Doctors and Nurses—for Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Bangladesh.
5. Pastors—for Botswana, Gyana, Taiwan, Bangladesh.

Those who are willing to go as missionaries to take up these jobs are invited to address their applications to the Secretary for Personnel Resources, Livingstone House, 11 Carteret Street, London SW1 H9DL, with a copy to the General Secretary, CSI Synod, CSI Centre, No. 5, Whites Road, Royapettah, Madras-600 014.

Council for Mission and Evangelism

1995-2000: A Period of concentrated, dynamic Evangelism

The Synod through the Council for Mission is requesting every member, congregation and Diocese within C.S.I. to observe the remaining five years of this century as a period of dynamic Evangelism, when under the power and guidance of the Holy-Spirit, we aim to bring in 25% more of new believers as members of Christ's body. We are setting apart these years as a season for self-examination, repentance, restitution and reformation.

The Council recommends the following concrete activities.

I. Mission Growth at Congregational/Diocesan level:

- (i) Each Diocese is recommended to conduct a survey and prepare a map depicting areas within the Diocese identified, where Missionary expansion is necessary, where there are only few or no congregations. Place the area under the charge of Pastors/Church workers with high evangelistic motivation. Mobilise the lay-volunteers and encourage their involvement. Please contact the Council if inter-Diocesan participation is helpful.
- (ii) Enter not only untouched geographical areas in the Diocese, but also areas of concerns, issues, needs and challenging situations for missionary engagement.
- (iii) Reach out to our former members who for various reasons left our fold/and critically evaluate our present Church activities.
- (iv) Conduct regular Bible-Study groups—encourage sharing, free expression and adopt a deductive method; Bible-Studies on themes like Church's Mission (use the Council publication to be put out soon) and Ministries, what is a Church, i.e. on Ecclesiology etc.
- (v) Revitalise the VELCOM Programme. But VELCOM without a vision will be a meaningless exercise. It cannot be assumed, it has to be caught. So prepare occasions for re-visioning the vision. Bible Study and prayer meetings, an earnest search to recapture the power of the Gospels for empowerment (Acts 1:8), an increasing sense of a Call as we look around

the present realities, a desire to see situations as Jesus would see them today, these can provide the atmosphere for visioning. Our emphasis today is not primarily on congregations, but on families and smaller groups of neighbourhood families. It is these strong-bonded 'stones' that can constitute a missionary community—the congregation.

- (vi) Try to implement the 20 point action programme suggested by the Council for a transformation.
 - (vii) Encourage and train our members living in a pluralistic context to engage in dialoguing with their neighbours. Help them to see the 'evangelistic' possibilities of engaging in Dialogue. It is an occasion for effective witnessing, though not for preaching over to the other (Our Motto is 'Every Christian Home a Missionary Unit').
- Dialogue should not be just verbal alone, as it is often understood, but also actions together for common needs, problems and issues—incarnational dialoguing remember the Great Commandment.
- (viii) Christian families and congregations together should lead every member to a personal commitment to Christ.
 - (ix) Large conventions still may have a place in Christian education and motivation. But speakers who explain the cross only as a propitiatory sacrifice offered to an angry, thirsty God and project Christian spirituality just as a passport to reach the Heavenly abode, should be definitely avoided. Like the Seminary Professor, and Bishop who are also 'convention speakers'—identify and encourage such persons. Church engaged in Mission today and locally, is an inevitable consequence of true spirituality—Incarnational spirituality.

Encourage ecumenical togetherness in Mission especially in our Towns and Cities.

- (x) In enriching our worship services, Healing, Music and relevant Teaching of the Word of God must find a prominent place. (Ps. 67:26) Healing Ministry and Music can bring together individual members, congregations and Christian Institutions.

- (xi) Priesthood and Apostolicity of all believers need to be emphasised and practised.
- (xii) Christian giving will be a normal reflection of one's commitment to Christ. Yet, our members should be encouraged for sacrificial and costly giving—'Cross-like giving'.
- (xiii) As an expression of our oneness, every C.S.I. family in each Diocese is exhorted to be a friend/partner of the Synod World Mission activities, by contributing Re. 1.00 to Rs. 10.00 p.m., according to each family's willingness and financial ability. This will go to the support of Mission to Nepal and later to Punjab.
- (xiv) Find resources to appoint full-time Difector of Mission and Evangelism in each Diocese.

II. Repentance, renewal, re-structuring and restoration

During these last years of the passing millennium, we aspire not only to grow numerically but also hope to have a qualitative reformation within. These two should go hand in hand. All the seminars conducted by the Council during the past two years reiterated unequivocally that the greatest hindrance for effective evangelism today is the shocking and shameful witness and dirty example set by Church. Hence, the urgent call is for restitution, repentance and renewal within. 1995-2000 is to be not only a period of jubilation and thanks giving, but also of penitential tears. Lam. 3:40-41, Lk. 12:47-48 and Ps. 51. Repentance is painful, it does not happen automatically; it calls for a change, transformation and reformulation. It is like the birth-pangs of a woman in travail, the new has to emerge, but it is truly promising in Christ.

REV. J. D. SOLOMON
Director.



VELCOM PROGRAMME

MADURAI-RAMNAD DIOCESE

1. We furnish here below a brief report on the above subject and reference cited.
2. (a) On 19-8-83 we had arranged the VELCOM programme at the CSI East Gate Church, Madurai, to which we have invited all the Diocesan Pastors, and out of 85 Pastors 80 were present and apart from that we have invited all the Pastorate Committee Secretaries and Treasurers of the Madurai city churches, and out of 40, 36 were present.
- (b) That was a full day meeting and mainly we were dealing with the issue of the Sacramental rights and privileges of the congregation and for that the expectation of the church from the congregation. After lengthy sharing in this subject, finally we arrived at a recommendation that all the families could be guided to contribute at least Re. 1 per month per family towards this Sacramental privileges which has nothing to do with the voting right of the congregation.
3. (a) On 18-10-93 we have arranged a VELCOM programme for the Pastors who hold additional responsibilities as the school Correspondents, along with other H.M.s of the schools.
- (b) That was again a full day meeting wherein we have covered matters such as scriptural teaching in

the schools and other religious activities which the Christian schools are commissioned to carry out. Further we also discussed about the burning issue of the training schools in the Tamilnadu Government context. Altogether we had a fruitful discussion and we rededicated ourselves to the educational ministry of the church.

4. (a) On 7-1-94 at the CSI Church, Tirumangalam we have arranged again for a meeting for all the Pastors extending a special invitation to all the Catechists working in the village churches.
- (b) Again that was a full day meeting wherein we have discussed issues mainly related to conducting worship in the village congregations and other aspects regarding the sustained spiritual nurture to be given to the village congregation. Altogether we had a fruitful discussion with a determination to take appropriate follow up action.
5. For the above three VELCOM programmes we have utilised nearly Rs. 25,000 from the Synod Priority Grant, with a matching local grants of equal amount for each programme.

In conclusion, we would like to state that the VELCOM programmes have been very useful for the growth of the church.

REV. SAMUEL A. RAMAR

First Conference of C.S.I. Ordained Women

There was a time where women were not allowed to read the scripture lesson, entering into the Holy altara and the pulpit.

The World Council of Churches held a consultation on the subject of ordination of women at Cartigny, Switzerland, in September 1970. It was in the year 1970 the first discussion on the ordination of woman was initiated in C.S.I. and requested the Dioceses to make further studies on the matter and take certain actions regarding the ordination of women. The Synod accepted the recommendation of the Theological Commission that suitable women should be ordained as deaconess and also resolved on the recommendation of the ministerial committee, to request all Dioceses to give serious attention to the question of the ordination of women as Presbyters, to study the matter in the light of the discussions in the World Council of Churches, the Lambeth Conference and other Church Councils and to report their opinion to the 1972 Synod through the Ministerial Committee.

The first ordination of women to Deaconates took place in the year 1976 in the Church of South India. The ordinands were in the age group 40 and 62 years.

Today the number of Churches which ordain women to the ministry has considerably increased. While in 1976 two women were ordained, in 1980, 18 were ordained. In 1990, 23 women were ordained. Ordination of women has become an established reality. It can reasonably be expected that by the turn of the century women will have been ordained in great number in most of the Dioceses.

The Church of South India Women's Fellowship arranged a Joint Consultation with Pastoral-Aid-Department and held the first Conference for the ordained women in Church of South India. Since 1976-1994 was a long gap of 18 years. Jesus looked up at the woman who was bent for 18 years and sitting in the temple of Jerusalem. Jesus healed her from her infirmities and she could give witness.

22 ordained women participated in the first conference of the Ordained women. This was held at Church of South India Synod Centre in the month of August, 17th and 18th, 1994. The Theme was 'The Participation of Women in God's Mission in India'.

According to the discussion and sharing of experiences, ordained women are dedicated to work for change in the Churches and Society at the grass roots level. Though there is difference in their salary, position and freedom, it is a new challenge for the ordained women to prepare the way for the coming generation to serve the Lord. Now this is a movement in the present cultural and traditional set up. There are dioceses where there is no ordained woman. There are dioceses once used to be called Orthodox now have ordained women.

Today the discussion and question of ordination of women is not much prevalent in the Church of South India. But the question is do we recognise the service of women and particularly the ordained women fully in the ministry of Jesus?

REV. IVALEEN AMANNA
General Secretary
C.S.I. Women's Fellowship

Wanted Men/Women with knowledge and experience of vocational training programmes at the Executive/Coordinator level for an All India Voluntary Organisation based in Bangalore.

Salary and perks negotiable.

Apply within 15 days.

P. Box No. 688
CSI Centre,
MADRAS-600 014.

ECUMENICAL CHRISTIAN CENTRE, WHITEFILED, BANGALORE

Applications are invited for faculty positions in the Indian School of Ecumenical Theology, a programme unit of the Ecumenical Christian Centre.

Applicants should possess a Master's Degree or a Doctorate in Theology and teaching experience at a theological college. Retired persons too may apply.

Appointments will be in the scale of Rs. 2500-125-3000-150-3600 and service benefits include furnished housing on campus, contributory Provident Fund, Medical and Leave (holiday) Allowances, etc.

Applications with copies of certificates should reach the Director, Ecumenical Christian Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore-560 066 by December 31, 1994.

REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

The Synod has appointed a committee for revising the Constitution of the Church of South India, in the light of our experience so far in operating the Constitution. The committee welcomes suggestions/proposals from members of the Church and well wishers for amendments/revision. These should reach the General Secretary of the Synod by 31st January, 1995.

General Secretary,

CSI SYNOD Secretariat,

CSI Centre.

No. 5, Whites Road, Royapettah,

MADRAS-600 014.

C.L.S. RECENT PUBLICATIONS

1. Laity Formation—D. Pothirajulu	Rs. 40.00
2. For Christ and The Church—Titus Ebenezer	Rs. 36.00
3. Aroma of Christ—M.J. Joseph	Rs. 15.00
4. The Story of Jesus—Alan Rudge	Rs. 15.00
5. The Coward—J.H. Anand	Rs. 22.00
6. Bible and Entomology—W.T. Chellappah	Rs. 50.00
7. Reflections on Indian Christian Theology—V.C. Rajasekaran	Rs. 60.00
8. Conflict in Corinth—Walter J. Hollenweger	Rs. 15.00
9. God's Call—(A Self-Help Bible Study)—G. Reginald	Rs. 22.00
10. William Carey - The Man and His Mission—P.P. Philip	Rs. 35.00
11. Women's Concerns in Asia—Franklyn J. Balasundaram	Rs. 20.00
12. A.J. Appasamy Speaks to the Indian Church	Rs. 40.00
13. God who Suffers (A Collection of Essays and Poems)	Rs. 30.00
14. Toward A Humanist Theology of Religious Harmony—Israel Selvanayagam	Rs. 40.00
15. Many Voices in Christian Mission—Dayanandan Francis and Ed. Israel Selvanayagam	Rs. 120.00

FORTHCOMING

1. S. Radhakrishnan : A World Philosopher—Ed. CH. Sreenivasa Rao
2. Bharatidasan's House of Darkness—trans. by M.L. Thangappa
3. Pura Naanuuru—P. Jotimuttu
4. Sadhu Kochukunju—Mathew Daniel
5. Biblical Plays—O.M. Rao
6. Ideals and Reality—M. Abel

For your requirements, please write to :

THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY

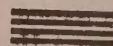
Post Box No. 501, Park Town, Madras-600 003.

or to its Branches at

Bangalore, Colmbatore, Cochin, Hyderabad, Kodalkanal, Madurai and Trivandram

Grindlays. Such a pleasure!

Grindlays Bank
Member ANZ Group



Contract GB.11.29